**II. Prison (Paul, the Prisoner, Apostle of God's Mysterious Grace) (3:1-13)**

Having detailed God's plan for reconciling individuals with God and nations with each other

(Jew/Gentile), Paul addressed his personal role in the plan of God (see Col 1:23b-28).

A. Paul's Commission to Reveal the Unsearchable Mystery (1-7)

B. Paul's Unworthiness to Reveal the Unsearchable Mystery (8-13)

The grace given to him was for a two-fold purpose:

1. To preach the good news of the *unsearchable* riches of Christ to the

Gentiles (8)

2. To enlighten everyone what is the mystery which was hidden from the

ages in order that it might be made known to rulers and authorities in the

heavenlies (9). This happens through the church.

**III. Prayer (Paul, the Intercessor, Prays that the King Would Take Up Residence in**

**Their Hearts) (3:14-21)**

Finally, Paul returns to the prayer that he started in 3:1.

1. Prayer for God's Love and Power (3:14-19)

The prayer is threefold, marked by the "in order that" ( i[na) clauses.

1. That the Father Would Strengthen Them & Christ Would Dwell in

Their Hearts (3:16-17)

2. That the Father Would Make Known to Them the Depth of His Love

(3:18-19a)

3. That the Father Would Fill Them with God's Fullness (3:19b)

B. Doxology (3:20-21)

The most typical element of doxologies is the assigning of glory to God, and it is

perfectly appropriate to conclude his prayer with glory given to God. That Christ

would be an instrument of God's glory is expected, but Paul's assertion that the

church is an instrument of God's glory is unique. This multi-ethnic community is a

living testimony of the God who has removed the barriers between humans and

himself as well as the hostility between Jew and Gentile in order to form a people for

his possession. The mere existence of the church is a testimony of God's glory. The

church is a masterpiece of God's grace.

**Exhortation (4:1-6:20)**

The exhortation section consists of five units marked off with the conjunction "therefore."

1. **Exhortation to Walk in Unity (4:1-16)**

A. Walk in the Way of Unity (4:1-6)

1. Christian Virtues that Cultivate Unity (4:1-3)

2. Theological Basis for Unity (4:4-6)

B. The Gifts of The Ascended Christ Nurture Unity (4:7-16)

1. Christ, Who Conquered the Powers, Is the Giver of Gifts (4:7-10)

2. Gifted Leaders Equip the Church for Ministry (4:11-16)